



The Holy See

*MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER POPE JOHN PAUL II TO BOUTROS-GHALI**

1. When faced with the challenges of history, humanity has been able to counter the most serious difficulties by appealing to the strength that in his merciful goodness Almighty God has put in their hearts and mind. Today the world is a helpless onlooker at the drama that for months has afflicted the peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the international community has wanted to aid the victims of this appalling war: the wounded children, orphaned, deprived of a future, disheartened by the cruelty of life; women violated, tortured or thrown onto the street, in the cold, left with what remains of their family, in order to save what can be salvaged, men and women, most often the elderly, deprived of shelter and forced to abandon whatever brought them happiness throughout their life.

Entire villages have been devastated, houses burned, places of worship churches and mosques, razed to the ground as if to wipe out every sign of transcendence. Human communities and families have been broken up. Life, so precious for each and every one, no longer has value. Death, torture, rape and expulsion are the many faces of hatred setting one people against another having different cultural, ethnic and religious roots, but who are geographically and historically close.

"No more war, never again!", cried my predecessor, the venerable Pope Paul VI, on 4 October 1965 before the General Assembly of the United Nations. In the face of the tragedy of Bosnia-Herzegovina, as Pastor of the Catholic Church, I beseech the men and women of good will who work in the United Nations Organization to do all in their power to end this conflict. The word of God rings in our ears: "What have you done! Listen: your brother's blood cries out to me from the soil!" (Gen 4:10). What have we done, what must we do, to end the escalating horror, violence and annihilation of man by man?

2. Today the United Nations Organization is the most appropriate forum for the international community to assume responsibility for certain of its members who themselves are unable to

accept their differences. The authority of law and the moral force of the highest international institutions are the basis for the right of intervention in order to protect peoples held hostage by the deadly folly of warmongers.

The dialogue in which the leaders of the parties in conflict are participating should help them to appreciate one another rather than stand in opposition, to use all their energy to put an end to the fighting in their land and not to seek political advantage; to build their own nation on the solid foundation of justice, which is a condition of peace, rather than to pursue ambitions that can only destroy it.

As I express my sorrow for this conflict in the former Yugoslavia and my confidence in the United Nations' peace efforts, I ask you, Mr. Secretary General, to convey these sentiments to the members of the Security Council, who are responsible for watching over the destiny of the peoples concerned. These peoples and the entire international community will be grateful to them for having had the courage of peace in not sparing any effort, any sacrifice, any means possible to restore peace to these peoples, shelter to the refugees and exiles, a home to the orphans, a place of prayer to believers.

With my gratitude for your commitment to the cause of peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Mr. Secretary General, please accept this expression of my great esteem.

From the Vatican, 1 March 1993.

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